

Utah Highway Patrol Watching For Illegal Window Tinting Violators

16 July 1987

The Utah Highway Patrol is cracking down on illegal window-tinting. Surprised violators are being handed tickets out on the highway and vehicle rejection notices at safety inspection stations.

Police officers don't like the tinting because they can't see what's going on inside cars they stop. Some people say tinting is dangerous because they can't make eye contact with the drivers behind those dark windows. The drivers behind the dark windows want the privacy.

"There are plenty of arguments both pro and con to window tinting," said Lt. Jack Gaviot, safety inspection chief for the U.H.P. "But no matter which way you come down on the issue, there are some explicit federal rules we have to comply with."

Window tinting is allowed behind the driver's seat if the vehicle is equipped with both left and right outside rear-view mirrors. The tinting material (usually a plastic film) must allow at least 70 percent of visible light rays to pass through, and it must not appear metallic or mirrored from the outside.

No tinting film may be applied to the windows to the immediate left or right of the driver's seat. Tinting may not be applied to the windshield with the exception of 4-inch strip across the top of the glass.

Gaviot said there are any number of window-tinting retailers who sell darker tinting material than regulations allow. People unknowingly apply it themselves; or, in some cases, businesses make applications without being aware they are breaking federal rules.

"Buyers should beware," Gaviot said, "because once the film is applied, it becomes the driver's responsibility."

Public misunderstanding is most pronounced over the 70 percent transparency requirement. As a basis for

comparison, vehicles delivered with factory air-conditioning usually come with 70 percent transparency glass already installed. The factory windows have tinting film sandwiched between two layers of glass, however, rather than applied as an outside coating.

It follows that application of any shade window tinting to factory air conditioning glass results in an illegal, overly dark combination.

Federal rules also mandate an anti abrasive quality for tinting materials. Coatings that are too soft soon become scratched and reduce or distort light transparency.

Utah's compliance with federal motor vehicle rules is not new. Federal Standard 205 was passed in 1966 and carries the provision that "No state or political subdivision has any authority to enact any law not identical to the federal standard."

Extradition Procedures Begin For Wisconsin Man Charged With Theft

Wasatch County has begun extradition procedures to return a man from Wisconsin to face third degree felony charges of theft [of a VCR] pursuant to a rental agreement, County Attorney Steve Hansen reported Tuesday.

He said Mark Murphy allegedly didn't return a VCR to the Video Shak in Heber City which he rented last April. "We have to prove that not only did he rent it and not return it, but that he kept it to such an extent that it constitutes a gross deviation from the agreement which shows a purpose to deprive the owner," Attorney Hansen explained.

Wisconsin law enforcement officers arrested Murphy on another warrant. They informed Wasatch County he was in custody after finding the outstanding felony warrant on the national computer. If found guilty, Murphy could face up to five years in jail, Attorney Hansen said.

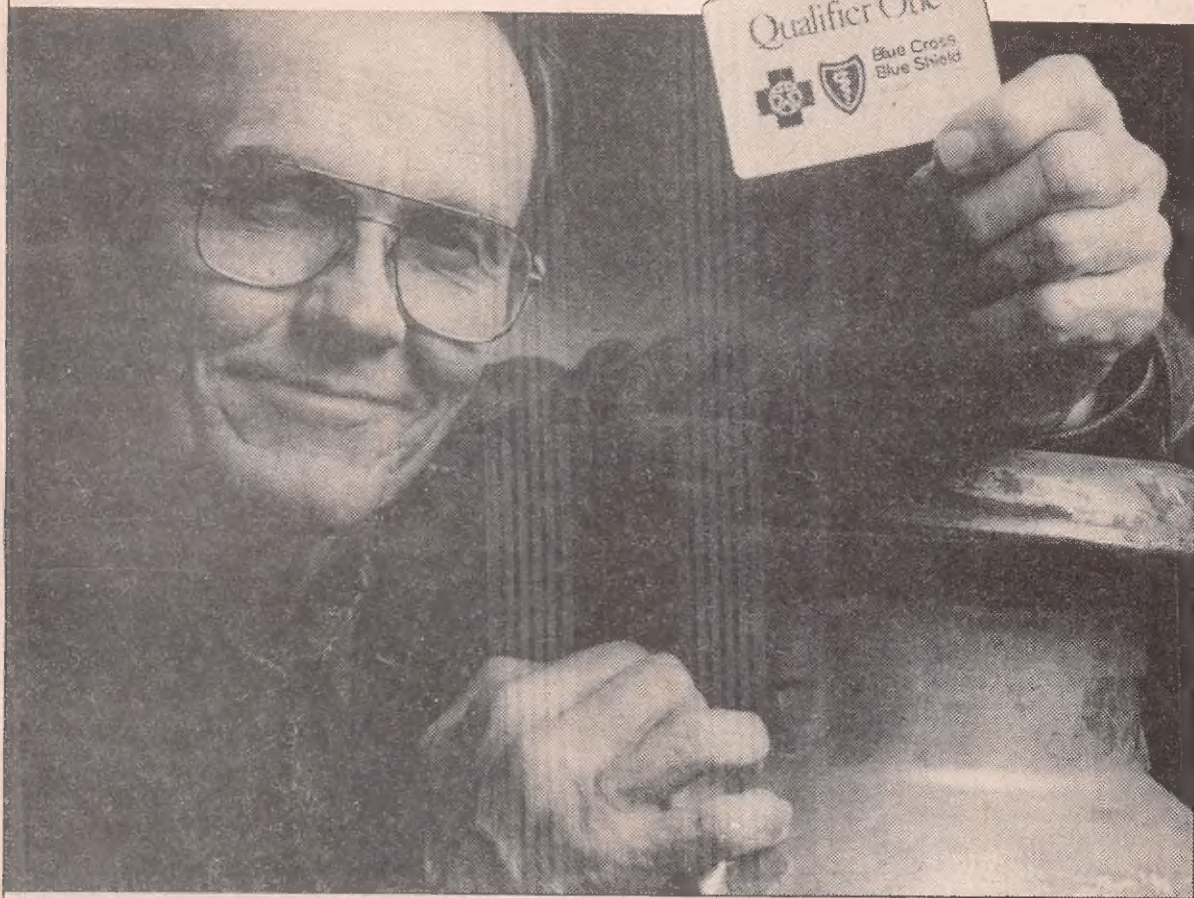
He explained, "The reason we're going to this extent is because I don't want people to think they can come in here,

commit a crime which is minor in their minds — a fraud or a theft upon a merchant or a resident here — leave the county or the state and feel little old Heber or little old Wasatch County isn't going to do anything about it. I felt that a statement has to be made. Whether it's a VCR or a car, it's still a principle."

He acknowledged that extradition will incur direct and indirect costs, to the state and to the county, as do any criminal proceedings. He said, "I can't look at that. Neither can judges. A judge can't say 'I'd better not send this man to prison because it's going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money.' It's a different branch of government that worries about that."

"I think merchants and people in the county need to know the county's going to back them. The police need to create a feeling among the people that 'we're not going to turn our heads on minor crimes.' The police need to feel comfortable that the prosecuting attorney will back them in their cases."

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